

# Integral Faith

"Homily helps and liturgy resources highlighting care for our common home."



## Homily Helps, Petitions, and Bulletin Notices for the 14<sup>th</sup> Sunday in Ordinary Time, Cycle A (9 July 2017)

### Homily Helps

#### † Comment for the day:

One of the central themes that emerge from today's scripture readings centers around hospitality. In these readings from the Book of Kings, a woman and her husband offer prophet Elisha a shelter and a meal allowing him to rest and regain strength to make the journey. In return, the man of God promises the childless woman that within a year, she will be fondling a baby son.

Hospitality is an ability to make room in one's world a room for the other. It is about taking notice of the needs of others and responding with compassion and solidarity. Hospitality is gratuitous. A person offering hospitality does so without asking anything in return. However, the Scripture repeatedly presents us with the stories of hospitality resulting in a promise of divine blessing.

Today's first scriptural reading invites us to connect that ancient tale to with our individual stories about human hospitality and the promise of divine blessings. It represents an opportunity to remind our fellow Catholics about some of their Italian, Irish, Polish, or German ancestors who were offered hospitality in the United States and, subsequently, experienced blessings of a new life for them and their children. Now, it is our turn to take notice of the needs of the new immigrants and refugees who are fleeing crushing poverty, violence, droughts and other environmental disasters exacerbated by climate change. These and other signs of the times challenge us even further to extend our hospitality to other sentient beings, to ecosystems and to our mother Earth. Along our common pilgrimage towards God, how receptive we are to the signs of their distress and to their critical needs to survive and flourish?

Pope Francis raises similar questions in his encyclical *Laudato Si'*. While some Catholics may dismiss that as something foreign to our tradition, it is in fact an essential element of the Judeo-Christian tradition as illustrated by the ancient, biblical concept of Sabbath and the Jubilee (see the quote below from the encyclical). Here, our Hebrew ancestors in faith are urged to pay attention to the cry of the poor and the pleas of the land. They are to offer them hospitality in the form of restorative justice that, ultimately, paves the way to a divine blessing of new life and salvation for all.

In his letter to the Romans, St. Paul also challenges the Christian community to remember, notice, and act in accordance with who they are in Christ – including living out the social implications of what it means to be a Christian – so that they may be capable of receiving the promise of the divine blessing of new life.

In the Gospel today, Jesus overturns many social conventions of his day. As we move beyond the jarring hyperbole employed in the passages, we will realize that Jesus was challenging his listeners to dare to exercise their new sense of identity and security, not so much in the traditional family ties, but

This resource is provided by Catholic Climate Covenant in collaboration with the Integral Faith Team, a group of male and female religious, priests, and lay people dedicated to serving the Church.

## Homily Helps (cont.)

### † Comment for the day (cont.):

rather in the radical project of the individual and social transformation based on love, radical hospitality, and restorative justice that Jesus came to initiate.

As we seek to avert ecological disasters that threaten to undermine civilization and the hope for a blessing of new life out of this crisis, we are engaged in writing our own story. Whether this is a story of hospitality or rejection has yet to be decided. May our preaching assist in helping to tip the balance in favor of hospitality.

### † Scripture passages to note:

**2 Kings 4:** Elisha promised, "This time next year you will be fondling a baby son."

**Romans 6:** We were indeed buried with him (Christ) through baptism into death, so that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might live in newness of life.

**Matthew 10:** "Whoever loves father or mother more than me is not worthy of me, and whoever loves son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me..."

### † Passages from Laudato Si' to note:

God gave humanity the chance of a new beginning. All it takes is one good person to restore hope! The biblical tradition clearly shows that this renewal entails recovering and respecting the rhythms inscribed in nature by the hand of the Creator. We see this, for example, in the law of the Sabbath. On the seventh day, God rested from all his work. He commanded Israel to set aside each seventh day as a day of rest, a Sabbath... Similarly, every seven years, a sabbatical year was set aside for Israel, a complete rest for the land when sowing was forbidden and one reaped only what was necessary to live on and to feed one's household. Finally, after seven weeks of years, which is to say forty-nine years, the Jubilee was celebrated as a year of general forgiveness and "liberty throughout the land for all its inhabitants" (cf. Lev 25:10). (#71)

## Related Prayers of the Faithful

**Option 1:** For the undocumented immigrants and refugees, that they find in the hospitality and solidarity of the Christian community a sign of God's saving presence, let us pray to the Lord....

**Option 2:** For ourselves, that we might be worthy of being called Christians by living out the Gospel values in compassion and justice towards all living creatures, let us pray to the Lord....

## Further Resources

Feedback: [IntegralFaithForLife@gmail.com](mailto:IntegralFaithForLife@gmail.com)

Webpage: [www.catholicclimatecovenant.org/resource/english-homily-help](http://www.catholicclimatecovenant.org/resource/english-homily-help)

*Visit our webpage to sign up to receive these resources delivered to your email inbox each month.*

